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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
SECRETARY VALEDICTORY – JANE HALTON AO PSM

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GANDEL HALL
NATIONAL GALLERY OF AUSTRALIA
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Gordon de Brouwer: Good afternoon, and welcome to a very special IPAA ACT Secretary Series event. It's fantastic to see such a great crowd here today.

Before I start and speak more about today's event, I'm delighted to be able to acknowledge the traditional owners, the Ngunnawal people, the traditional custodians of the land on which we are meeting. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture, and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region, our city and our region. I'd like to acknowledge and warmly welcome other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may be attending today's event.

Today's very special for public servants, as we resume the Secretary's Series event by farewelling our longest serving Secretary, Jane Halton, AOPSM, Secretary of the Department of Finance and Dean of the Secretaries.

A few weeks ago, Jane announced her resignation from this role, and as a colleague I'm sad to see her leave. As President of IPAA ACT, delighted that you agreed to speak to us, to Canberra IPAA ACT, on your second last day in the public service. Thank you, Jane, for making the time to give a keynote address it's very much appreciated by us all.

It gives me great pleasure to see so many, again, of our Secretary colleagues. I think there will be thirteen. There are a couple of empty seats but they will fill up, so there will be thirteen. As well as Kathy Lee, the head of the Service for the ACT government. Very importantly, Trevor Sutton, Jane's husband. A very warm welcome.

Just a bit of information around today's keynote address by Jane. After Jane's valedictory address, we'll open up the audience for questions. Then following some updates on the IPAA ACT event schedule, then I'll invite you to stay a little bit longer with some colleagues over some light refreshments. I'll really now, ask Jane ... I was supposed to be sitting here in the front, Jane!

Jane Halton is Secretary of the Australian Department of Finance. She's responsible for essential services delivered by finance, including, very importantly, the delivery of the Australian government budget, the management of Australian government assets and business operations of our government. Before her appointment to Secretary of the Department of Finance in June 2014, she was Secretary of the Australian Department of Health for over a decade, so it's a long-standing, long-serving work. Jane's been awarded a number of prizes, including winning the public policy category of the 2014 AFI Westpac Hundred Women of Influence Awards, and was recipient of the Public Health Association of Australia's 2015 President's Award. Jane was a recipient of the Order of Australia Award in the 2015 Queen's Birthday Honours. She's been a great colleague, a trusted friend and a great advisor.

Please join with me in welcoming Jane Halton, AOPSM, for her final public address as the Secretary of the Department of Finance.

Jane Halton: Thank you. Can I also acknowledge traditional owners of the land on which we're meeting

today, the Ngunnawal people, and pay my respects to elders both past and present. I'd also like to extend that respect to other Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander people present today.

Thank you, IPAA, for the invitation to make this address. IPAA plays an increasingly important role in the continuing development of public sector professionals, and I'd like to compliment them on the work that they do. In a slight reversal of how these talks are usually undertaken, I'd like to start with some thanks. At the Oscars, when you go on for too long, they just turn the sound down, and as I don't want to risk that happening to the most important part of these remarks, I'll start where most people finish.

A career like mine would not have been possible without, as Hillary Clinton might say, "a village." My husband, Trevor, and my sons Morgan and Elliott, have been unwavering patient and supportive. I've had the privilege and the pleasure of being schooled, coached, nagged, and my many failings pointed out to me by the most fantastic group of mentors and colleagues over the years. Working with some outstanding women, Mary [Menane 00:04:49], Mary Scott, Mary [Common 00:04:52], Judy [Blaso 00:04:52], among others, made a lasting impression and taught me how to be a professional public servant who cares about quality and seeks to actually deliver something.

I've been blessed with outstanding colleagues who made me look much better than I really am. The longest serving, Rosemary, David, John, are just a few of this hardy bunch. There are many others here today. You all have and will continue to make an important contribution to our nation. To the finance team, you're awesome. I should say, "Awesome." At nearly seventeen of partnership, that, as she keeps reminding me, has lasted longer than many marriages, Rhonda has been the most incredible support. She is without doubt the archetype of the professional executive assistant. To all of you, named or not, to my colleague Secretaries, your feedback, friendship, support and your professionalism I thank you for.

The offer of a valedictory address is not one I accepted lightly. Much like the monarchy, when the Queen is dead, "Long live the Queen." As there is currently no need for an obituary or a eulogy, and not wanting to do a Conroy, I decided that a few words as a capstone to thirty-three years would be appropriate.

Of course, it's hard to follow in the valedictorian shoes of my good friend Peter Varghese. As many of you know, Peter has a sharp intellect and a fine analytical mind, and his recent observations about the importance of institutions, our relationship with Ministers and others, the importance of deep policy thinking, the case for radical incrementalism, and values and leadership, are ones I wholeheartedly endorse. He also had some very useful observations about the challenge of relationship with advisors who are often young and enthusiastic. To those looking for some advice, comfort and handy hints on where the line should be drawn, I encourage you to revisit his speech. The challenge for me is not to duplicate his remarks, as this would be a familiar but unnecessary echo. I'll steer a parallel and sometimes more personal course in these reflections, on what it took to become a professional public servant, and something of the challenges facing the APS if it is to maintain its crucial role in the effective functioning of our democracy.

Like others, I'm an accidental public servant. Having started down one course and finding it not a long-term fit, I did what many other young Canberrans did: I got a graduate job in the APS. It was not my intention to stay for thirty-three years, but, hey, here I am.

Of course, legend has it that I was weaned on all things bureaucratic, courtesy of my father, Charles. This isn't strictly true, as until he became the equivalent of a Deputy Secretary in the Canadian public service, he had worked in British industry. It is the case that I learnt from watching his work effort, often greeting eager young clerks, who are not so young anymore, at the door to receive a tightly held and very important package of documents for his review. No email or faxes in those days. I learnt the art of discretion, often answering the telephone with him sitting at the dining table and greeting the caller with, "Can I ask who's calling?" Responding, "Hello, Michelle (Grattan)." "Mr. Hunt." "Mr. Jones." "Mr. Fraser." Then I'd look for the hand signal that said, "No, I am not here," or, "Yes, I'm available, Prime Minister." Mostly I learnt the craft of analysis, debate and how to hold my own in the contest of ideas. It was excellent training for the career ahead.

Many years after those early probing kitchen discussions, having won the legendary Max "The Axe" to all of us, around to a thorny social policy show, Max shook his head and said, "You really are a chip off the old block, aren't you?" I took that as a great compliment, but I digress. I digress.

I attended senior Secretary college in the ACT, and this was just over the road from the Woden Plaza, which coincidentally is within eyesight of the Department of Health's offices. Public services were referred to as "pubes." That wasn't a compliment, and the torrent of beige or, so it seemed, cardigan-clad people heading out at lunchtime did nothing to advertise the merits of public service employment. Strangely, the disconnect between home and the teenage prejudice didn't seem to strike. It did later.

The public service that my cohort joined was a clear reflection of the past, and the effects of previous policies were still very evident. It was less than twenty years since the marriage bar had been lifted, and only thirty-eight-point-five percent of the workforce was female, as opposed to fifty-eight-point-four today. In the leadership ranks, women were scare. Eleven-point-nine percent of EL ones, six percent of EL twos, and four percent of the SCS. I met many women who were still angry that their careers had been interrupted with devastating consequences for opportunity, seniority and pension income. Today, these numbers are fifty-point-eight, forty-four-point-one, and forty-three-point-three percent, respectively.

Today, we are also better educated, with twice the rate of tertiary qualification. We're a bit older. Thirty-two percent aged over fifty, as opposed to thirteen-point-one percent, and we work in really different ways. No longer do we have a clerical administrative stream, tea ladies, typing pools, lots of files and the need to learn how to folio them. Today we all type badly, do much of our business electronically, and work at a faster pace than at any point in history. It's this pace of change that requires us to think now about how to equip our people, manage risk, continuously evolve how we work and to communicate more

effectively. I'll reflect a little on each of these issues.

The modern APS is awash in information, is subject to the contest of ideas and part of the relentless media cycle that spares little time for thoughtful analysis. Politics is a pretty tough game. While maintaining our apolitical stance, we can get caught in the uncomfortable no man's land in the middle of a point of contention, and increasingly this is in the full glare of the media spotlight. The challenge for the APS and IPAA is how do we prepare our next generation and the generation after that for leadership in this kind of environment?

When I joined the APS, there were few if any academic courses that taught you what supply was or the advance from the Minister of Finance, the legislative process, Senate estimates, my special subject, and I never missed one. Parliamentary committees, and how to appear before them, and I've done a few of those, too, were all things that you learnt on the job. How to advise, formulate options and weigh the pros and cons. When and how to communicate, how to work with others, including those enthusiastic advisors, the joy and challenge of stakeholders, and, before it actually got a name, how to practice co-design. What matters in administration and how to run things. The importance of accuracy. Caroline, I still proofread, don't I?

Caroline: You do.

Jane: I find stuff. Yeah. How to ask questions and mostly how to make things happen were all things that I served an apprenticeship in. Of course, I could write a whole thesis on how to work with Ministers.

One supervisor with a sharp blue pencil, an ex-journo, taught me that academic writing was not good for actually communicating. Another, how to properly read legislation and know the difference between black letter law and the art of the possible. "Never," she said ... Apologies, lawyers ... "Never," she said, "get final legal advice until you know what it will say, and always start with 'How can I...?' Not 'Can I ...?'" Excellent advice.

I was well-schooled in the craft of the public sector. There was time for this to happen. I was given increasing responsibility, sent to explain very difficult policy to very angry stakeholders on more than one occasion, spent a lot of time working with state governments developing and then implementing new policy. None of this I learnt at university, and most of it was able to be done away from the glare of the political spotlight and media attention. People coached me and I was able to make mistakes, get my feet singed in the fire but continue walking on now toughened and more experienced foundations.

How we do this for our people going forward is something of a challenge. Of course, training and development has been here since the beginning, with leaders exhorted to focus on training the future occupants of responsible positions as early as 1910. In the US there has been a more focused approach to teaching in the government domain for a far longer period. The Kennedy School of Government dates to 1936. In Australia, it wasn't

until the post-war era, 1947, that attention to more generalist training emerged. It wasn't until 2002 that we developed our own ANZSOG.

Consistent with the community at large, we need to school our people more formally and ensure their ongoing professional development. Much as doctors, lawyers, et cetera, all undertake academic training and then require continuing professional development, we need to think more carefully about how we equip senior leaders and the middle managers for the engine room of the public sector. The graduate certificate in public policy and finance, we, Finance, have co-designed with a number of the departments here and the University of Canberra is one such example. The speed and complexity of what we do today does not lend itself to an ad hoc apprenticeship. We simply cannot give the breadth of knowledge and experience our people need in a timely and effective way without concentrated doses of learning.

Notwithstanding our work on modernizing the APS, we can all point to a litany of an inquiries into failures of public administration telling us the reports therein, to build capability, be more agile, responsive or risk-aware. Now, I've certainly been through some high-profile issues in my career, and every time I see a colleague going through something similar, I really do empathize with them. The political rough and tumble takes no prisoners and makes no allowances. As Jeff Gallup observed only earlier this week, the modern way is to personalize, catastrophize and generalize. In this case, we have no choice but to institutionalize our approach to and train our people in risk management.

Let me tell you the story of Peter's briefcase, and it's not a Peter who's here. This event occurred around twenty years ago in the context of a very politically sensitive issue over which Ministers actually lost their jobs. A recent search of Finance records unearthed the following note off a file, and I quote: "After delivering the brief and the report itself to the Secretary's office at 8:25 this morning, I returned to Civic by bus. I caught a two-three-one, and, because the bus was a little crowded and contrary to my usual habit, I placed my briefcase in the luggage area behind the driver. On arriving in Civic I left the bus, forgetting to pick up my briefcase. I realized what I had done within about a minute, but on running back to the bus bay, found that the bus had left! The briefcase contained a clear plastic envelope encasing: one pink copy and one white copy of the package I had left for the Secretary, including draft letters to the individuals investigated; a floppy disk containing the only electronic versions of each of these documents; another floppy disk with a range of work files."

What then ensues is a long description of the many phone calls, radio messages and the pursuit of buses across Canberra in search of the errant briefcase, which was brown. Failing to locate it on any two-three-one bus, buses with the two-three prefix were then targeted. At 10:00, the officer received a call from the Secretary's office to discuss changes that the Secretary wanted in the brief, and I quote: "I told him," the phone call maker, not the Secretary, "what had happened, and asked him to give me an hour to keep chasing action before causing any further excitement."

After speaking to action at 10:35, the officer asked that the Secretary and Deputy Secretary

be notified what had happened. The office suggested that the movement of the brief be expedited to forestall any leak. He was later advised, and I quote: "The Secretary has asked that the offices be advised and that the re-keying of the documents was underway." At 1:40, nothing had turned up, and, at 2:00 PM, an ACT employee with superior knowledge asked for ticket details. At 2:30, the Action Depot had located the briefcase.

The note concludes, "He returned it later in the afternoon. As far as I could see, nothing was missing and I have no reason to believe it had been opened." That official went on to work in highly sensitive areas at the centre of government. There was no leak and there were no consequences to his career. Now cast yourself forward twenty years, and replay those events. Heads would roll. Twitter would have been on fire, and there would have been a race to interview the person on the bus who found the document. It would have hit the airwaves inside the hour, and anyone who was caught short by not knowing it had happened would have been spitting chips, and rightly.

The consequences of error are just much greater today than ever, so we need to recognize and manage risk and know we can't outsource it. In truth, we actually have a low appetite for risk-taking. We do our best to avoid or transfer risk via outsourcing, internal regulation and, goodness help us, red tape. The commonwealth risk management policy took effect on the first of July, 2014, and as you know it was part of the PGA reforms, and I really hope that this proves to have been a watershed moment.

The policy has nine elements which I'm not going to repeat here, but I commend them to you. How are we going? I'm obliged to tell you that I probably would say "mixed" is the answer, and we range from a B to a C-. We're not as advanced as we think we are, and in a Rumsfeldian sense, we're moving from the unknown unknowns toward the known unknowns. There's a long way to go yet. Departments are beginning to incorporate risk management into their business processes. We're still developing risk appetite and tolerance statements, and finding ways to embed risk culture into day to day behaviour. We need to lift our game by promoting a positive risk culture, walking the talk, making risk management a core part of doing business, articulating entity appetite and tolerance for risk, encouraging the regular sharing of information with others. That doesn't just mean with others in your own department. I'd also commend the notion of a chief risk officer to you. All of this will help each of you to not have a Peter's briefcase experience.

In recognizing the need for a structured approach to risk, we've learnt much from private sector approaches and we need to be more, not less, outward focusing. With the current pace of change, levels of public scrutiny and expectations, speed of communications, seismic shifts in technology and low tolerance for failure, the modern public service cannot hope to be self-contained nor self-referencing. Having the right technical advice, expert knowledge or specialized service to assist in or input to, decision making, delivery and purchasing is not optional. These skills may well not be held in our own departments or in the APS at all. Increasingly, we will need to work in a networked and collaborative way, sharing experiencing, scare skills and resources, delivering joint outcomes, and purchasing goods and services collectively, and adopting the best management techniques and organizational principles in a timely way.

We will need to invite people in, some temporarily, some permanently, to augment our skill base. We will sometimes need people outside to do things for us to provide assurance that we are on the right track. There are peculiar implications for Secretaries and agency heads. A go-it-alone mentality will not work. We also need to work harder on foresight and continuous adaptation of how we work, the techniques we use and how we deploy resources. Anticipation, ongoing adoption of new technologies, expertise and the latest management approaches are vital. Flexibility's crucial. This pressure will become more acute, not less.

Of course, sometimes we may draw from the past. Take the tea break, something long gone in the modern workplace, but we now know that taking a break is good for the brain and creativity, and, yes, productivity. A modern response is unlikely to be the return of the tea lady, but it may be the kind of smart office design and work practices that we have recently implemented in finance, having looked very carefully at the research literature and best practice in the private sector.

We can anticipate now the impact of big data, powerful technology and Generation Zed, who know how to use it. They will have the skills to search for information in our vast holdings, much as they would actually search the internet. They will be good at visualizations and presenting information in a way that is easy to understand. They are the scrolling generation. If they don't like something, they move on. Jobs, education, life choices. Importantly, while they will have career plasticity, they will not need to work somewhere to actually belong, and this is important. As we partner more with those outside and the line between inside and outside inevitably blurs, the core of the APS, its nature and purpose and the values espoused in the act must continue. Just what that looks like in thirty-three years' time is hard to know.

Consistent with my point about foresight, we need to think now about coming challenges and opportunities. In finance, our recent use of test labs and agile project methodology with a build, test, refine approach are helping ready our workplace for the future. We're also continuing our focus on specific areas of weakness. Suzanne, how we communicate is one example. This is an APS-wide issue. Whatever your thought of Amanda Vanstone, she had a way with words. Like her APS centenary speech, mandarins, pineapples and lemons. Her taxonomy of public service types, including "boffins," apparently common in finance. Known to say, "That's all very well in practice, but how does it go in theory?" My favourite, "Careerists: those who can smell warm air and the upward current like a carrion eater that can smell flesh." It's her view about how we institutionalize jargon in our training to the point that we don't even know we're doing it that I wanted to draw to your attention, because she is right. Let me read you her illustration of this, with the prescription of how you train the child in the art of bureaucratic obfuscation, i.e., evasive communication.

"To your child at night, in soft tones say, 'Scintillate, scintillate, aerial vivific. Fane would I fathom thy nature specific, cast as thou art in ether capacious strongly resembling a gem carbonaceous.'" Now, any of you with a decent education would know where this is going, because what you should actually have said to that child, in plain English, is, "Twinkle,

twinkle little star. How I wonder what you are, high above the sky so bright, like a diamond in the night." The point's even truer today. It's hard to be heard in a world that gets noisier and busier by the minute. While this was a criticism of us, we need to understand that we are competing for attention and understanding. We cannot exclude others in how we communicate. Short and to the point is often best. How we Tweet, write and talk is material to our success. Use language that can and will be understood. If you aren't heard, you can't advise.

Finally, before I've really worn out my welcome as one last area for ongoing focus. The numbers I outlined earlier show women have made progress up the leadership ranks, but some people in this audience can tell you the glass ceiling is still there, and you hit it at different levels in parts of the APS. This needs to change. While I fully support the work that is done on unconscious bias and other academic endeavours, we also need to do some really practical things now.

Let me ask you this question. Would it be right if there was still exclusive men only drinking clubs where a subset of the leadership group met and told really awful, distasteful jokes at the expense of women and other marginalized groups? Answer? No. Much as the reaction to the Trump Tape was predictable and swift, the answer is really, clearly no. It's obvious. Of course, we're doing much to address the obvious, which is good.

Let me ask you two more questions. Is it okay that women get interrupted many more times than men in meetings? Is it okay when a woman makes a good point in a meeting, the conversation moves on and then the point is repeated by a man two or three speakers later, everyone congratulates him on what a good suggestion he's made? What's the answer? No. While it isn't obvious, both practices remain common, even in workplaces where there is apparent gender balance, and I know you'll find this hard to believe, to people like me. I know. Hard to believe. Sheryl Sandburg, Facebook, “Lean In”, et cetera, has written about how women speak less in meetings, not only because they're often "manterrupted" but because women are actively punished for making themselves heard. We need to notice these behaviours, and just as Donald Trump was called out for interrupting Hillary Clinton fifty-one to seventeen times in the first debate, we need to make sure we call out these behaviours.

To do this, here's my suggestion: introduce a no interruption rule. It's easy. Let everyone have an equal say. It's just not that hard. I still go to too many meetings where there are very few if any women, and then they say nothing. If you work, and this is not everybody, but if you work in a male-dominated part of the service, take women with you to meetings and ensure they get a say.

Finally, we need forty-forty-twenty, which is a minimum of forty percent of each gender, to ensure that there is balance in each and every workplace. Don't just agonize about not having enough women to promote to the SCS. Find women in the EL cohort who you will target for promotion in the next two years. Give them the experience to make sure they make it. Don't negotiate this, just do it. Others have.

As the we of these remarks becomes you, let me summarize. Don't just do a job. Be a professional and keep up the professional development. Be heard and worth listening to. Be brave but not crazy, and manage risks so you can actually deliver real things without losing your briefcase. Be a steward of the present APS, its role and values, and the future. Care about quality and stop interruptions. For me, I'm taking a much-needed break, but to the person who suggested yesterday that I could now make Trevor's lunch, can I say, "Really?" Can I say, "Only after I start ironing his shirts."

Thank you.

Gordon: Don't run from me, please.

Jane: Oh, sorry.

Gordon: That was very thoughtful and very practical, and thank you very much, Jane.

Jane: Pleasure.

Gordon: It resonates. It resonates very much. We'll open up to general questions, if you'd like.

Jane: Okay.

Gordon: We've got a few minutes.

Caroline: Hi, Jane?

Jane: Hi.

Caroline: I'm Caroline. I'm from the Department of Finance and, yes, Jane has one of the best editorial eyes that you'll ever find. I just wanted to ask, "Do you think that a career public servant is a thing of the past, with the new generations coming up? If so, what do we lose by not having career public servants?" The second part is, "in your dealings with colleagues or peons, underlings, even, what have you most respected about how they have advised you and what have you looked for in your people?"

Jane: Let me, start with that last question first, Caroline. Caroline's challenge has been to get something through me, when I proofread, just so everyone knows, without me finding something. We did the annual report the other day and I found something, didn't I? Hence my comment about proofreading.

Look, the thing I have always valued most and I think sometimes for people this can be difficult, is people who are prepared to be frank, people who are prepared to tell you what they think, people who are prepared to basically say, "I don't agree with you and I think you're about to tip off a cliff." I think one of the challenges for many people is to not be intimidated by office, to actually participate as an equal in a discussion. Now, you know me well and know that I want you to tell me, but I think the thing that has been most valuable

to me is ... There's so many people in this room, I can see so many of you, who have been prepared to walk into my room and say, "You know, I know we're doing this, but I actually really think we should do that, and here's a bunch of reasons why." For me, that has been the most valuable thing, and the fact that people have been prepared to work so hard over so many years.

The career public servant ... One of the reasons I made that comment about the increasing vulnerability of who we are, we do need more people to come in, but there is a core to what we do which is about the professional public service. It is that knowing how to brief. It is knowing how and when to push the envelope, as we know sometimes we have to do. I think there will be a balance. I think it's almost impossible to think of people who will only ever come in temporarily to the public service. Now, I won't be here in thirty-three years, so I don't know. Maybe I'm wrong about this, but I do think we will see more in and out flexibility, but I do think the core of people who actually understand what it is we do as professional public servants will remain.

Judy: Hi, Jane. I'm Judy Schneider. Jane, you've had the most amazing career and there's one question that I'd really like to ask you, and that is the Canberra Times actually talked about it a bit when you announced your retirement, and that was that you'd been on the ... No, it was a people smuggling task force.

Jane: Yeah, that committee. Yes.

Judy: Yeah, and it had been very difficult and Labor had become quite embittered.

Jane: Yeah.

Judy: You were promoted to Secretary and then there was a change of government.

Jane: Yes.

Judy: You got Nicola Roxon as your Minister.

Jane: Correct.

Judy: I was just wondering whether you might be able to consult your thesis on Minister management and tell us how you got through that period to become the longest Secretary in the APS.

Jane: Yeah. Look, it's a great question because I think the outcome was not what some were expecting. Can I say it that way?

I have always done my job basically professionally, and when Nicola became the Minister, she and I had a conversation about a range of things and a range of policies that they were looking to implement. Essentially, we talked about how that would happen and what we were going to do, and we got on with it. It's interesting, isn't it, that when you do the job

and do it as vigorously for one side as you do for the other ... In other words, you are apolitical. You bring your best advising, managing, every other skill that you bring to bear to the table, I think it shines through for what it is to be an apolitical public servant.

Now, we all know a lot of people want to paint us one way or the other. We all understand that. Essentially, my view is by deeds you demonstrate that you are actually apolitical, and that's basically how I've always done what I do. As a number of the people in this room know, I have a propensity to call a spade … and I will tell people, and if they don't want to hear my advice, that's fine. I try and tell people in a way that I think they can hear. That's my point about actually pitching your message in a way that will make it accessible. If your advice as a public servant isn't taken, that's fine, as long as the Minister of the day has heard you, particularly if you want to warn them that there are traps or tricks or issues that they need to know of before they decide to do something. If you've done that, you have discharged your job.

Certainly, with Nicola, we went on and we did some pretty important things. We brought in the new hospital financing arrangements which have actually driven down growth in hospital prices. My special subject, tobacco. Simon's here. There's a couple of people here. Nathan, who we introduced plain packaging. It had never been done anywhere in the world. We have now one of the lowest smoking rates in the developed world and that is saving lives all over our country. I did my job. Yeah. Thank you for asking.

Gordon: While we wait for another question, just on that. In your office, you do have a big plain packaging box-

Jane: Bryan.

Gordon: Oh, it's Bryan. Yes. Yes.

Jane: Hey, Finance people! Bryan's going home tonight.

Gordon: Yeah.

Jane: Can I tell everyone else who Bryan is?

Gordon: Yeah. Yeah.

Jane: For the people who don't know who Bryan is, I actually have the demonstrator size pack of plain packaging, tobacco plain packaging, which has the not quite dead Bryan who's on the verge of dying of lung cancer on the pack. It is very confronting. He was very young and he actually asked that his experience be used to dissuade other people from smoking. When you sit in the visitor's chair in my office ... A number of the people in the front row have done it, you look at Bryan.

Gordon: Yep.

Jane: I keep getting asked by Finance staff when he's going home.

Gordon: Please put your hand up if you want to ask a question, but just on that experience, what's the one thing that stands out to you as a learning of getting policy done on the plain packaging?

Jane: Plain packaging. Some of you would know that not only this had never been done anywhere in the world, but we were targeted in a very aggressive way by the tobacco companies. We suffered from multitudinous FOI requests, all in little bitty parts, all designed to burn up resourcing. We were subject to some level of personal attack. Now, in my context, bring it on, do your worst, but this was quite difficult.

One of the things that you learn, I think, from that sort of thing, is resilience, that actually if something is worth doing it's worth doing and you have to push through. In this particular case, yes, we have had to defend legal claims internationally. We have had to deal with the kind of personal attacks and people trying to deflect us and dissuade us from that course. It was the right thing to do. The evidence now is unambiguous, which we knew it would be, and it's saving lives.

Virginia: Hello, Jane.

Jane: Hello!

Virginia: Hello! Thank you so much.

Jane: Virginia!

Virginia: My name's Virginia Haussegger. I'm here-

Jane: Did anyone not know that?

Virginia: I'm not as a journalist any more ...

Jane: Oh…

Virginia: I am a journalist, but not here in that capacity, but rather my forthcoming role with the fifty-fifty by 2030 foundation at UC. I was really interested in what you had to say, of course, about women and the struggle for women to reach senior roles. I've got a couple of questions, but just firstly, you gave me some really good tips there and some really practical things that men and women can do.

Jane: Yeah.

Virginia: I know we've spoken about this many, many times, and on panels and over years, but certainly a lot has happened in Finance and a lot has happened under your leadership, but given that you're stepping out now, can I ask you to honestly answer what's your view

across the ... APS-wide of leadership's commitment to really increasing representation of women in senior positions and key decision-making roles? We do see a lot of ticker-box stuff going on. We see a lot of gender diversity courses, tick "yes, we've done that."

Jane: Yep.

Virginia: Beginning to get the feeling that, for some people, they're not really committed to this process. What do you think? Is the leadership across the board really genuine in its concern about increasing representation of women?

Jane: What I'd say to you, Virginia, is I actually think people are very genuine when they say that they're committed to it. I think the danger for us in the APS or, as of 4:59 tomorrow, you, is actually that we think we're there yet, because you look at the stats. Over fifty-eight percent of people in the APS are women, but they are still a majority down on the lower levels. I actually think if you look at what's happened in the corporate sector you actually get a stagnation. "It's all good. We've done that. Right. Move on." The challenge is actually to keep driving for the outcome, which is why I made the comments I made. I do not doubt for a second that every one of my colleagues on the Secretary's board is completely committed to the diversity agenda. I don't doubt that. The challenge is, what we do about it and that we don't lose focus on actually achieving it.

Now, it's interesting. If you look at the gender pay gap, and we all know the national statistics on the gender pay gap. In public sector, it is lower than in other sectors; it's only about seven percent in the public sector. I would ask you the question, is that acceptable? The answer is, "No, it isn't." Actually, and this is the point I was making about the things that aren't obvious, because if you think about it there are still parts of public sector. This includes, can I say, people who advise up on the hill, who actually do quasi-negotiate their conditions and where they start on a range and all those sorts of things. Now, the objective evidence shows us that the women are not doing as well as the men in equivalent positions, and it's not just because the men have been there longer.

Yes, I think there's commitment. My concern is, and so do my colleagues. This is a little piece of advocacy. In fact, I said this in my note to my colleagues when I announced to them I was going, that the diversity, and it's not just with women, the diversity agenda is something they have to remain actively committed to and drive it all the way through to completion. Now, it can be done. We know, in the public sector we are doing better than the private sector. It can be done, but exactly as I said today, I don't want to hear anybody, and I have had a few people say to me, "Oh, we can't find any women to do those SCS jobs here." I'm sorry. Okay, maybe not right this minute, but in two years' time, if you haven't put the energy into those more junior women and got them to a position where they can actually compete, and by the way, you've got them to a point where they will put their hand up, you have not done your job. Yes, there's commitment. Yes, there's work to do.

Good luck with your new job.

Stacy: Jane, hi. My name's Stacy, as you all know. My question's really simple. You've told us a lot

about what you're passionate about. You've told us what you found difficult. What have you enjoyed the most? What have you had the most fun with? What have you found really satisfying about your fabulous career?

Jane: There's two things I've enjoyed the most, and it sounds trite.

One is the people. I think the thing about the public sector is the people. The people who are here because they want to be here. They committed. They're super bright. We do incredibly interesting work and it means a lot when you work with people who you really like to work with.

The other thing that I've really enjoyed is actually making a difference, and making a difference, depending on what was in front of me, making sure that I actually delivered an outcome. If there's one thing I can say to you all, you don't want to play it so safe that you deliver nothing, because actually we don't do these jobs just to churn the wheels. We do these jobs because we actually want to deliver something, and if I think about some of the privileges I have had ... I was talking to the journalist, he's probably still here, from the Canberra Times. Who comes from Fregon in the Pit Lands in South Australia. I've been there many times, so the opportunity to go and make, even if it's a marginal contribution to some of the more difficult issues in our community, and then to lead in somewhere like Finance, there are the things that I've enjoyed most. Thank you.

Gordon: I would say, just on your ... The comments about women are very important and they're very personal and direct, but you're also, frankly, outstanding in the way that you talk about diversity in general.

Jane: Yep. Thank you.

Gordon: I want to acknowledge that because you've gone out of your way on that issue, on that.

Jane: Thank you.

Gordon: I'm going to change mode a little bit, now, because we're going on to an unscripted matter. Oh, okay.

This is a unique occasion for your valedictory address but also for IPAA. It's also something very special for IPAA and hopefully for you. A few months ago, IPAA ACT nominated you, Jane, for the IPAA National Fellow Award to be a Fellow of IPAA.

Jane: Oh!

Gordon: This will be formally announced by the IPAA national president in Adelaide next week, but talking with Penny and I and others, very strong view that this is a great opportunity to announce the IPAAs intention to award you a National Fellow Award and making that public this evening. We felt it was very fitting to recognize this, recognize you for this in front of your colleagues, your broader colleagues, and as part of your valedictory address.

Jane: Thank you. I'm very honoured.

Gordon: We don't have the plaque to give you, but it's on the screen and you'll get it next week.

Jane: Thank you. Thank you.

Gordon: Here's a small gift from IPAA ACT.

Jane: Thank you. That is so kind. I very much appreciate it. Now, can I stand up and give you a kiss? Yeah, okay, right.

Gordon: Yeah, thanks. Thank you.

Martin Parkinson: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. It's a huge pleasure to be here and to have the privilege of delivering a vote of thanks on this remarkable occasion. Jane, can I join Gordon in adding my sincere congratulations and welcome to you to join the National Fellows of IPAA.

Jane: Thank you.

Martin: It's a great honour. As all of you here already know, Jane's made an enormous contribution to public life during her thirty-three year career. This has been an incredibly distinguished career and we haven't gone through the highlights of it today, but, yeah. There's just too many. Jane's been doing remarkable things and doing it for such an incredibly long period. Almost fifteen years as a Secretary. I find that almost unfathomable. I got seven and was like, "Oh, thank God I'm out of here."

Jane was the second-ever female Secretary after Helen Williams, is currently the longest-serving Secretary and the first woman appointed to head a Commonwealth central agency. In and of itself, if that was it, that would be a remarkable set of outcomes, but when you actually think about what you did along the way, everything, and particularly go back to the smoking and the sort of things that you drove in health over twelve years, just remarkable in terms of ...

It just highlights why we're doing these jobs, because we want to change the world. We want to change the prospects out there for our fellow Australians, and there are people now who are alive or who will live longer, more fruitful and richer lives, because of the work that you did. I don't think anybody can get a greater valedictory than that you've made the world a better place for a whole pile of people, almost none of whom you have or ever will meet. That's pretty remarkable.

Jane, I was particularly taken by your challenge to ask the leaders who are here after you depart to prepare the next generation and the generation after that for the leadership challenges not only that in the environment we face today but that will emerge over time. You are absolutely right that we need to focus on developing our capability and equipping

ourselves and our colleagues with the skills to do this sort of job in a very complex, fluid, dynamic environment, and one which will be dramatically different in five years' time, nevertheless thirty-three years' time. You're absolutely correct that the approach of the past, that the apprenticeship that people of your and my vintage have received, is no longer viable, and we need to find new models that work in this new environment.

I also agree with you totally that we need to be better at managing risk. In fact, I've got that very question at CEDA earlier this week: "Are public servants inherently risk averse?" I said, "Actually, I don't think we are inherently risk averse. I don't think we're any more risk averse as individuals, but maybe systemically we are because of the incentives in the system, and that's up to us to try and work out how to change those incentives." We need to face outward more and we need to communicate better.

Let me say that, as much as I agree with you on all of those things, I couldn't agree more strongly, more wholeheartedly with you than on what you said about diversity and equality. We are making progress but it is not fast enough, and the challenge that each of you here and everybody in the entire public service should throw back at your Secretaries, at your agency heads, at your Deputies, at your FAS's, at everybody in a leadership position, the question is simple: "What are you doing to make things different? What are you doing to drive diversity and inclusion?" Not just gender diversity, as important as that is, but diversity more broadly.

In saying that, one of the lessons I think I've learnt over time is that one should never underestimate the importance of strong female role models, and that is exactly what you've been in the public service, but, more broadly, in our community. Yes, we've made progress and it's been great that in recent times you've been sitting at the table as one of five female Secretaries, but we can do better and we will. You, everyone here and everyone in the public service who's not here, should demand that of us as leaders. If we're not achieving it, keep asking us what are we going to about it?

I'm also aware of the need to do better on not interrupting. There's somebody down the front going like that. I wouldn't dare point to which of my Secretary colleagues this might be, but it is a message I get at home all the time.

Jane, on behalf of everyone here tonight and those across government and the public service more generally, I extend an absolutely hearty vote of thanks to you for sharing your reflections with us, for the support that you've given me and so many of your colleagues who are here tonight, but, more importantly, for your service to the people of Australia. As the Prime Minister said yesterday, when ERC commended Jane for her contribution to Australia and Australians, I share his comment, which was, "I have no doubt that you'll continue to contribute to your nation," and I again think that that is a remarkable valedictory. I wish you all the very best in the future.

Jane: Thank you. Thank you so much.

END OF TRANSCRIPT